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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4872
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 3007
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 3122
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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2385
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RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 3170
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 5615
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000710

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/RSA KMOODY
AF/S FOR B. WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR J. HARMON AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR MICHELLE GAVIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/04/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: ZIM CONSTITUTIONAL CHAIR GIVE UPDATE ON PROGRESS
AND HURDLES

REF: HARARE 588

Classified By: CDA Donald K. Petterson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) Co-chair of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Constitution, Douglas Mwonzora of the MDC-T, briefed the Embassy on recent developments regarding Zimbabwean efforts to craft a new constitution. Parliament is moving forward on the creation and composition of 17 thematic sub-committees that will be charged with eliciting popular feedback on key governance issues. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Mwonzora met August 14 with Embassy officials and Peter Quaranto, a member of Senator Russell Feingold's staff, who was on a fact finding trip to Zimbabwe.

Constitutional Train Slow to Leave Station

¶3. (C) Douglas Mwonzora, the MDC-T representative of the tri-partite chaired Parliamentary Select Committee on the Constitution (PSCC), discussed progress in establishing the 17 constitutional thematic sub-committees. Each sub-committee will consist of approximately 25 people, 75 percent of whom will come from civil society with the remainder drawn from Parliament. The MDC-T and ZANU-PF will each nominate MPs to chair seven sub-committees, the MDC-M will chair two, and a traditional chief will fill the last chair. Xolani Zitha, Director of the Office of the Speaker of Parliament, separately told poloff on August 19 that ZANU-PF has still not submitted their nominees for sub-committees. The MDC-T and MDC-M have already done so, as has civil society.

¶4. (SBU) ZANU-PF will head sub-committees on: Founding Principles; Women and Gender; Executive Organs of the State (security forces); Minorities and Languages; Land, Natural Resources and Empowerment; Media; and War Veterans. The MDC-T will lead sub-committees on: Systems of Governance; Youth; Labor; the Disabled; Elections, Transitional Provisions, and Independent Commissions; Religion; and Citizenship and the Bill of Rights. MDC-M will head Separation of Powers and Public Finance and Management, while the chiefs will chair Traditional Leaders and Culture. At the conclusion of the four-month consultative phase in mid-November, these sub-committees will submit three copies of the same report to different government organs to avoid allegations of tampering that occurred during the 2000 Constitutional Referendum.

¶5. (C) Funding for the constitutional drafting process remains a limiting factor. According to Mwonzora, the PSCC has scaled back its constitutional budget from USD 36 million in April to a current USD 18 million. The majority of this is expected to come from donors; however, despite pledges by several countries, UNDP's USD 2 million grant represents the only funds received. (NOTE: Other donors have asked the GOZ for a detailed project proposal before releasing funds. END Qfor a detailed project proposal before releasing funds. END NOTE.) The GOZ was at one stage expected to match donor funds, but Mwonzora felt this was unlikely as the government only contributed USD 350,000 of the USD 1.25 million cost of the First All Stakeholder's Conference held in July.

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COMMENT

¶6. (C) So far ZANU-PF resistance to the constitutional process has been relatively minor and limited to the disturbance at the All Stakeholders Conference (reftel) and delays in forming the sub-committees. However, the party views a new constitution as paving the way for new elections which it would likely lose. It would not be surprising to see ZANU-PF obstruct and delay the process. As the process shifts away from Harare into rural areas, Post will closely monitor possible ZANU-PF efforts to coerce public testimony and craft a constitution to Mugabe's liking. END COMMENT.

PETTERSON